

2024 State of Homelessness Report

Division of Human Services

PREPARED BY

Carter Stephenson
Public Health Planner
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Partner Appreciation

Addressing homelessness requires a coordinated and compassionate effort from our entire community. Through collaboration, dedication, and shared commitment we can make a lasting impact in the lives of our unhoused neighbors.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our community partners for their invaluable contributions. Your hard work, advocacy, and unwavering support play a crucial role in providing essential resources, shelter, and pathways to stability for those in need.

Together, we are making a difference. Thank you for your continued partnership and dedication to building a stronger, more inclusive community for all.



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What is Homelessness?

Homelessness is categorized into four groups by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These categorizes are used to help identify people who need assistance and to develop programs to address their needs.



Category 1: Literally Homeless

- An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
 - Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; or
 - Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or
 - Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness

- An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
 - Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - No subsequent residence has been identified; and
 - The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Note: Includes individuals and families who are within 14 days of losing their housing, including housing they own, rent, are sharing with others, or are living in without paying rent

What is Homelessness? (cont.)

Category 3: Homeless under other Federal statutes

- Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age or families with **Category 3** children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:
 - Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;
 - Have not had a lease or ownership interest in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;
 - Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; and
 - Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers

Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

- Any individual or family who:
 - Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence;
 - Has no other residence; and
 - Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing

Note: “Domestic Violence” includes dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or family member that either takes place in, or causes them fear to return to, their primary nighttime residence (including human trafficking).

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the National Alliance to End Homelessness also have commonly-used definitions of homelessness. Scan to view them.

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

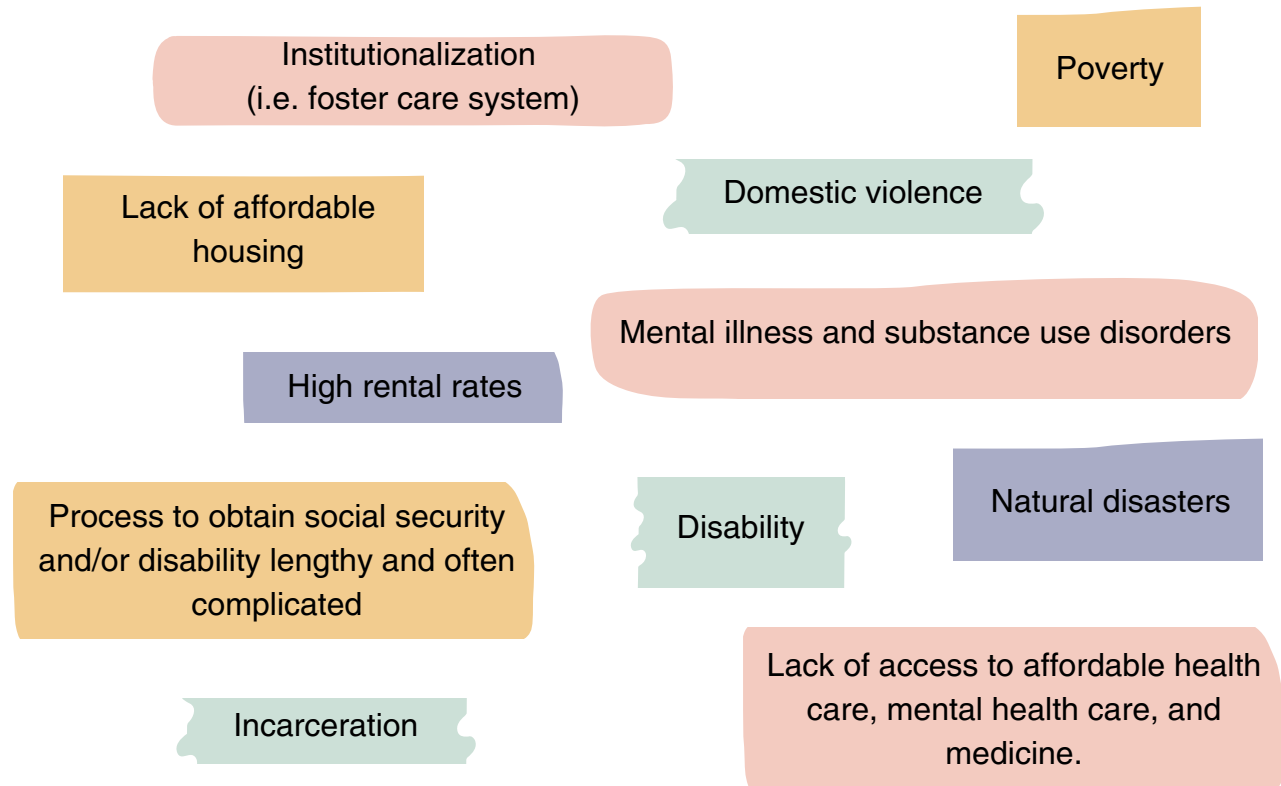


**National Alliance to
END HOMELESSNESS**



Why Might Someone Experience Homelessness?

Homelessness arises from a combination of individual, structural, and systemic factors. These can include:



Boone County and the City of Columbia Housing Study, 2024

A significant driver in rising housing prices and access to affordable housing is corporate investor activity. Investors are buying up and renting properties that were previously owner occupied.



Investors are responsible for a little **over 25%** of residential real estate transactions today, compared to only 12% of transactions in 2002.

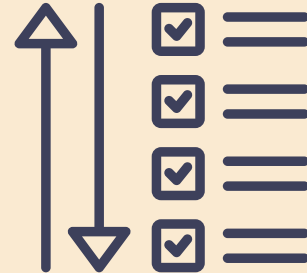


(Boston, & Amarach Planning Services, 2024, p. 57)
Scan the QR code to view the entire housing study.

Tools for Understanding and Addressing Homelessness

Prioritization List

The Prioritization List is a community-level tool to track and address homelessness. Person-specific data is updated regularly to provide more actionable information on homelessness.



How is it used?

- The Homeless Management Information System is used to add people experiencing homelessness to the Prioritization List. People experiencing **chronic homelessness** have been homeless for a period of 12 months or four episodes of homelessness in two years. They rise to the top of the list, and are eligible for the limited resources available first.
- People experiencing **non-chronic homelessness** do not fit into the definition of chronic homelessness. While they face fewer barriers and have access to fewer housing resources through our system, they may find housing through other support networks such as family, friends, or community resources—or, in some cases, without any assistance at all.
- The Boone County Coalition to End Homelessness (BCCEH) manages the list and facilitates bi-monthly case conferencing with agencies and organizations. During these sessions, the list is reviewed name by name to determine next steps for securing housing for individuals and/or families following a housing-first approach.



What is the “**housing first approach**?”

Answer: Prioritizing providing housing without requiring specific conditions like sobriety or treatment, believing that stable housing is the foundation for addressing other challenges and improving lives (NAEH, 2022).

Tools for Understanding and Addressing Homelessness

Point in Time Count (PITC)

The PITC is an annual census survey conducted by shelters and volunteers across the country. It is a count of a community's homeless population.



What does the Point in Time Count include?

The PITC consists of a sheltered and unsheltered count.

The sheltered count includes individuals staying:

- In emergency shelters
- In safe haven projects
- In transitional housing

The unsheltered count includes individuals staying:

- On the streets
- In their car
- In any place not meant for habitation

Why is it important?

- Informs Congress about the extent of homelessness
- Helps communities plan services and programs
- Provides data over time to track progress
- Directly linked to funding allocations for homelessness programs

Strengths

- Captures unsheltered individuals who may not participate in local social services
- Provides standard for comparison to other states or Continuum of Care Programs (CoCs)
- Includes both sheltered and unsheltered individuals

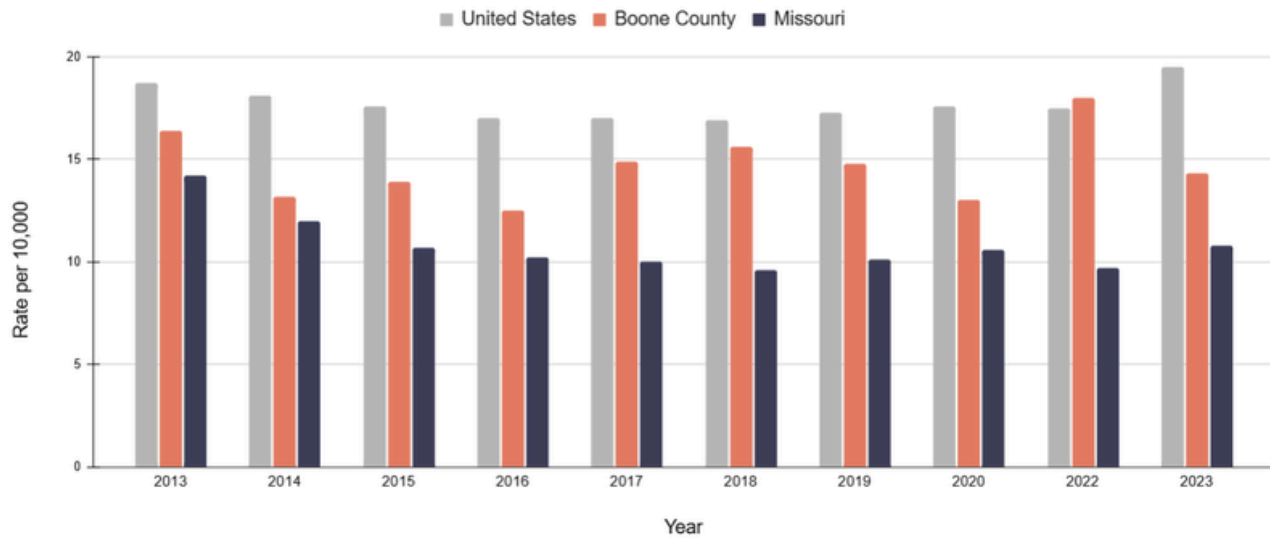


Limitations

- Data reflects only one day, making it a snapshot
- Methodologies for unsheltered surveys vary, affecting consistency
- Does not account for individuals couch-surfing or temporarily staying with others

Figure 1

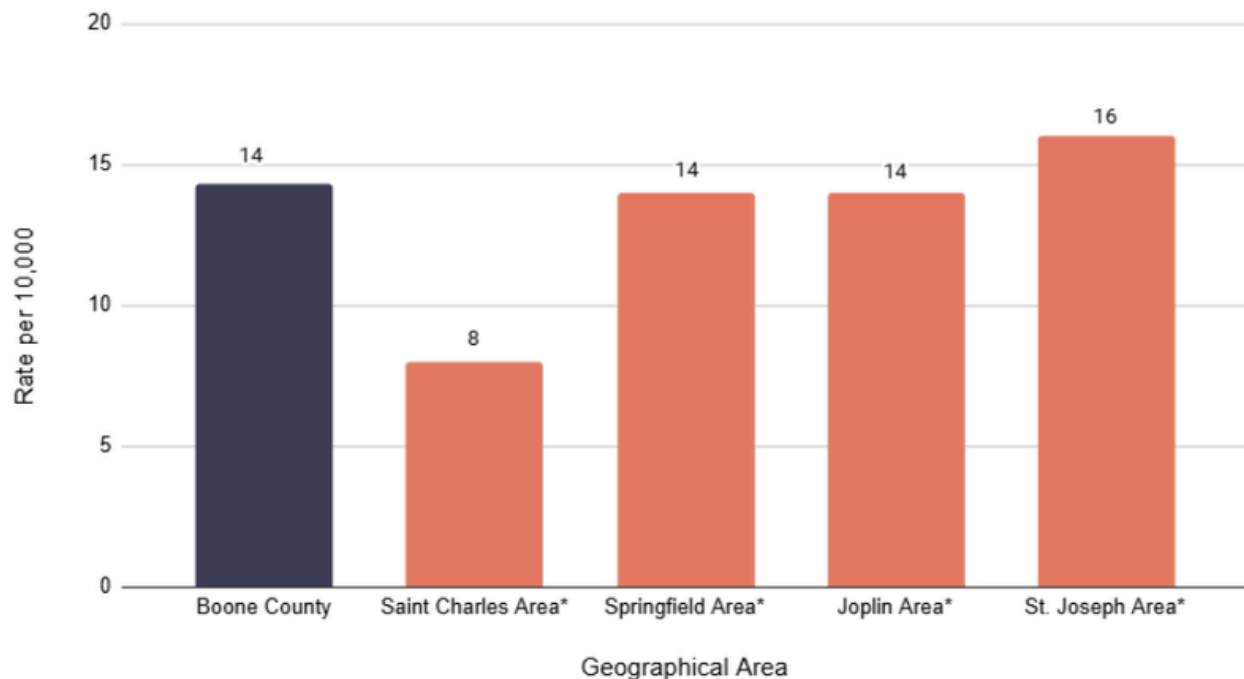
Homelessness Rate per 10,000 United States vs. Missouri vs. Boone County, MO



From 2013 to 2020, the rate of homelessness in Boone County was consistently higher than the Missouri average, but lower than the national average. In 2022, the rate in Boone County was higher than both the Missouri and national averages (Boone County Coalition to End Homelessness [BCCEH], n.d.), (National Alliance to End Homelessness, n.d.).

Figure 2

2023 Homelessness Rate per 10,000 in Missouri



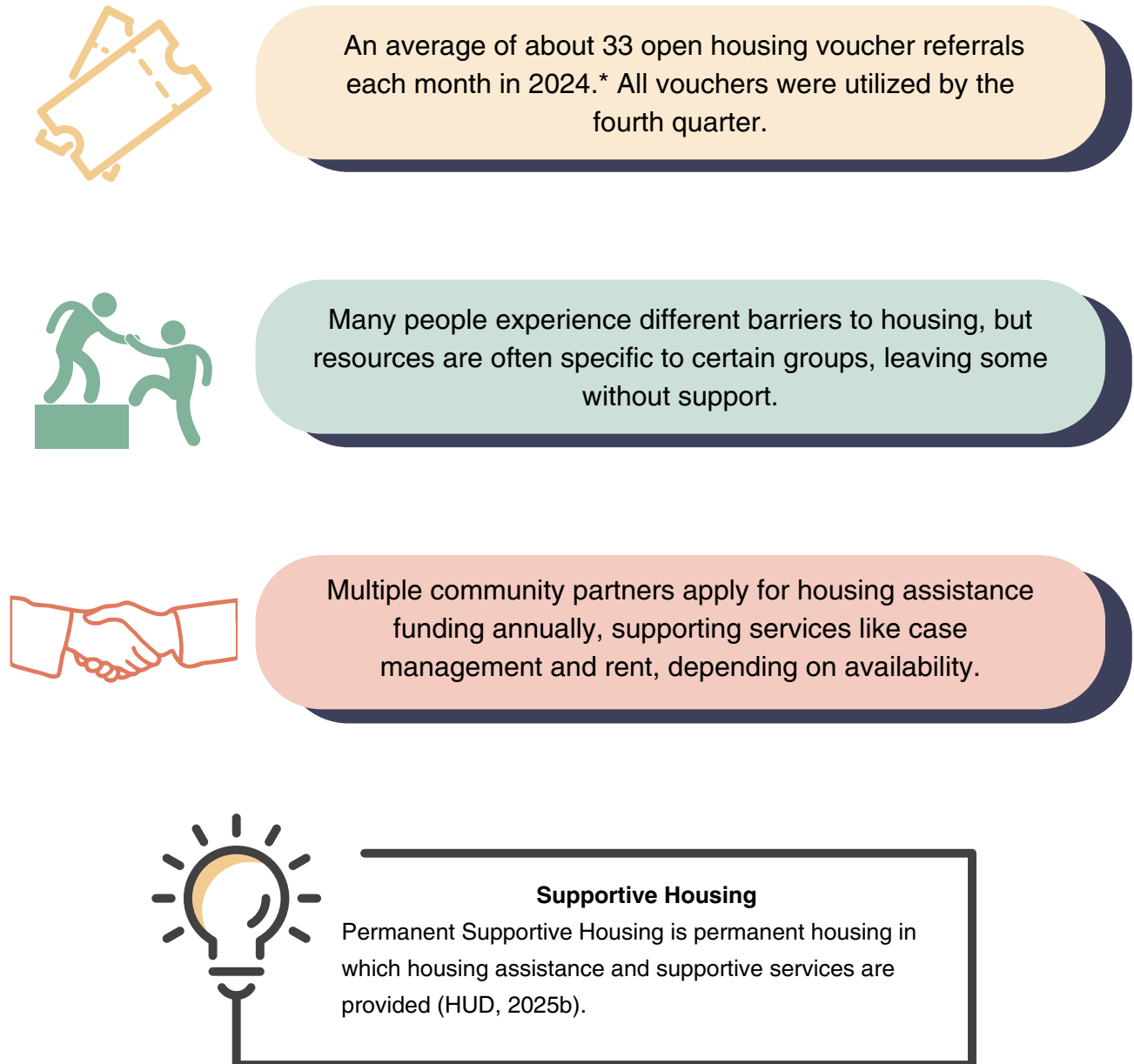
In 2023, Boone County had similar rates of homelessness per 10,000 when compared to the Joplin, St. Joseph and Springfield areas (National Alliance to End Homelessness, n.d.).

*Saint Charles area: St. Charles, Lincoln and Warren counties. *Springfield area: Springfield, Greene, Christian and Webster counties.

*Joplin area: Joplin, Jasper and Newton counties. * St. Joseph area: St. Joseph, Andrew, Buchanan, DeKalb counties.

Throughout 2024, housing voucher usage remained high, reflecting significant community engagement and need. Because vouchers are distributed at different times by multiple organizations, monthly totals vary and do not indicate changes in demand. The data highlights the community's consistent reliance on this vital resource.

Figure 3



*Source: Boone County Coalition to End Homelessness (Boone County, MO), 2024; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.

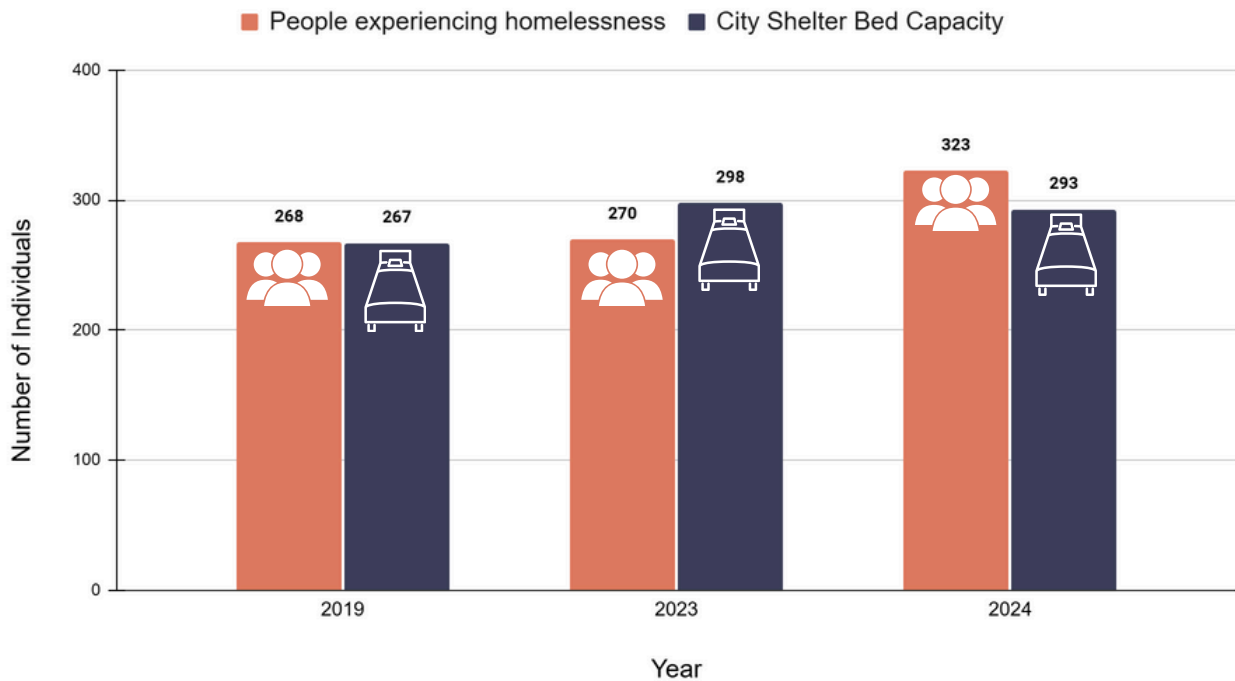


Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing is permanent housing that provides short-term (up to three months) and medium-term (4-24 months) tenant-based rental assistance and supportive services to households experiencing homelessness (HUD, 2025d).

Figure 4

People Experiencing Homelessness vs. Shelter Bed Capacity, Columbia, MO



Shelter bed capacity within the City of Columbia has remained relatively stable over the three sample years shown here (Boone County Coalition to End Homelessness [BCCEH], n.d.). Notably, 2020-2022 are absent from the dataset, during which time information was not collected. In 2024, there were significantly more individuals experiencing homelessness than beds available within City limits. This trend is reflective of national and state data (Empower Missouri, n.d.).

Figure 5

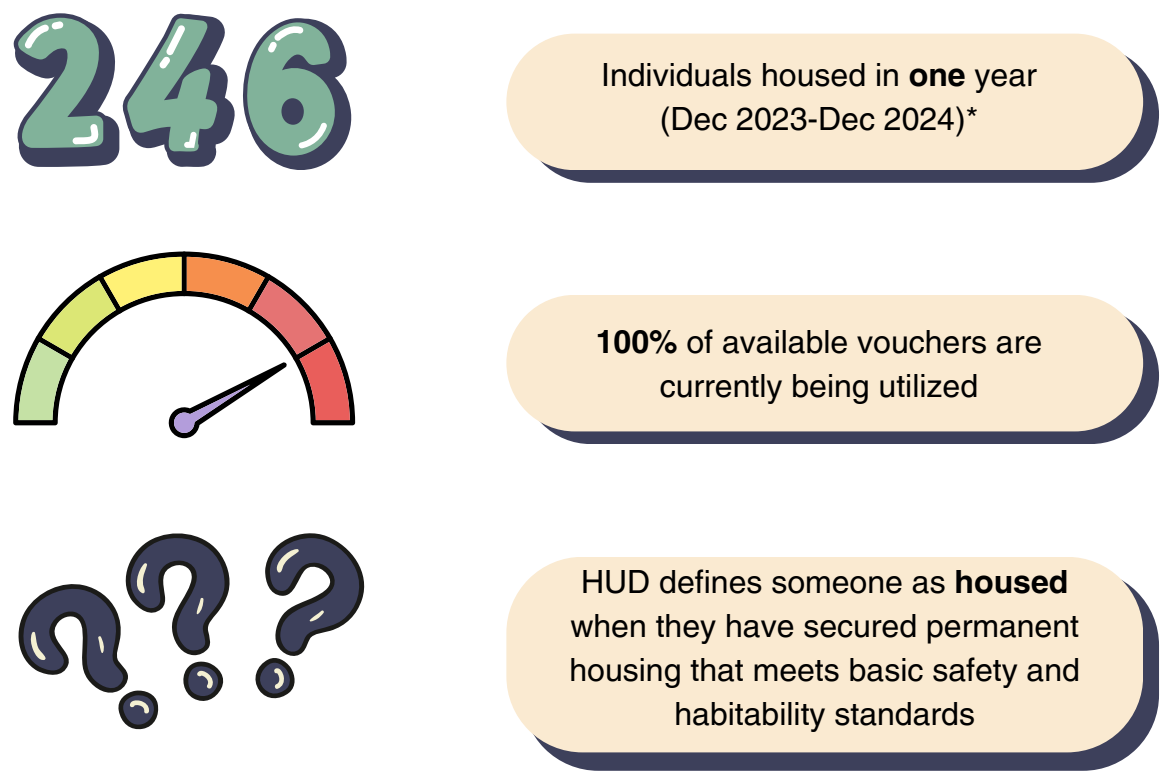
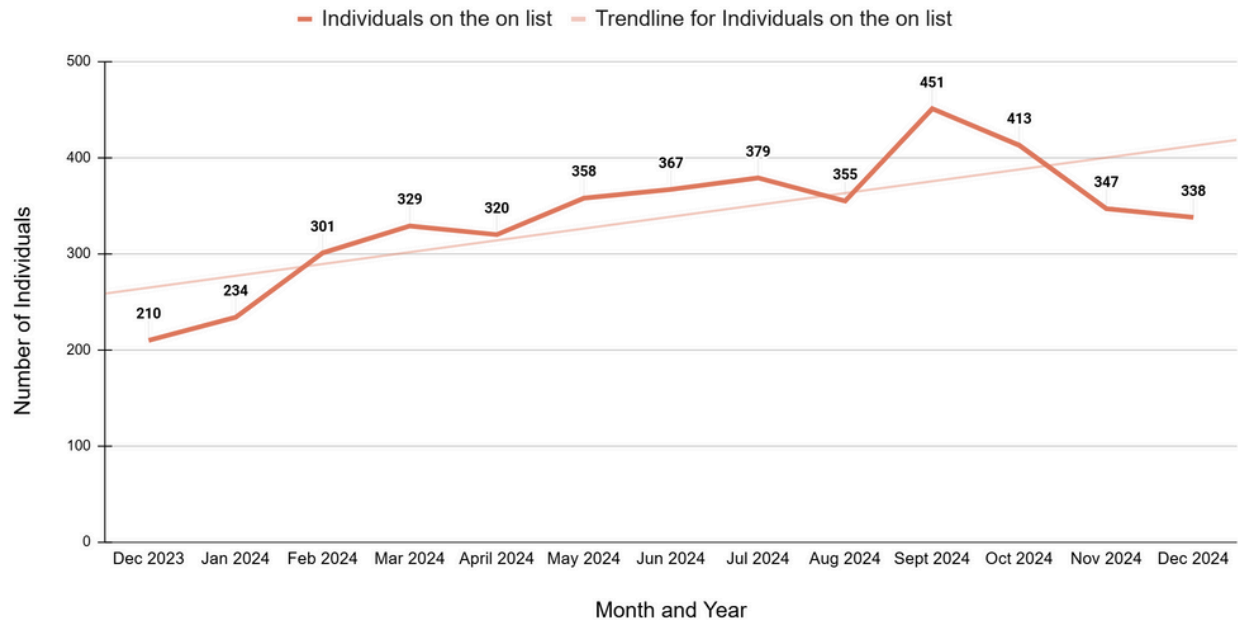


Figure 6

Individuals on the Prioritization List by Month, Boone County, MO

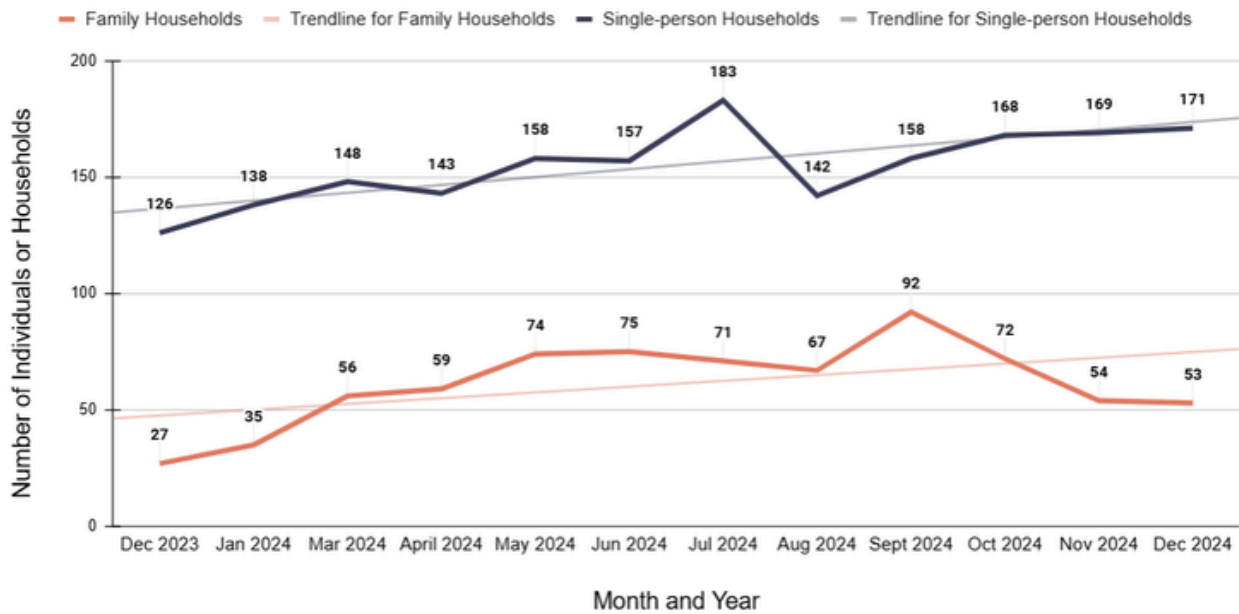


From December 2023 to December 2024, the number of individuals on the prioritization list consistently increased (Boone County Coalition to End Homelessness [BCCEH], n.d.). The number of individuals includes all household members. See Figure 7 for individual breakdown. Although a cumulative prioritization list is not maintained, this pattern aligns with a national trend.

*Source: (Boone County Coalition to End Homelessness [BCCE], n.d.)

Figure 7

Family Households vs. Single-person Households on Prioritization List, Boone County, MO



Between December 2023 and December 2024, there were consistently more individuals on the prioritization list when compared to families (2+ people). Overall, both groups are seeing an upward trend (Boone County Coalition to End Homelessness [BCCEH], n.d.).



***What is Coordinated Entry?**

Answer: HUD defines **coordinated entry** as a process for assessing and prioritizing people experiencing homelessness and connecting them to housing services (2025a).

Figure 8

Between
153 - 254

Active households on the prioritization list
each month between December 2023 and
December 2024.

Figure 9

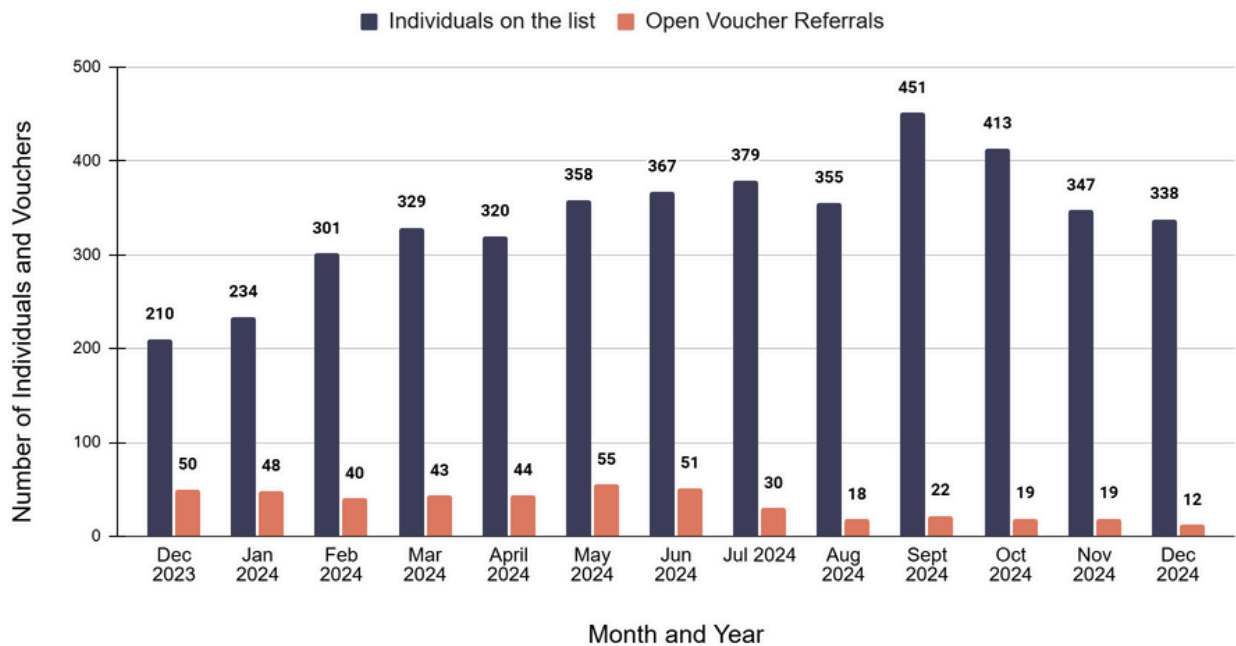
19 

Average number of Individuals/families housed
each month through coordinated entry or
resolving on their own, and removed from the
Prioritization List (December 2023-December
2024)**

**Source: (Boone County Coalition to End Homelessness [BCCE], n.d.)

Figure 10

Individuals on Prioritization List vs. Open Voucher Referrals, Boone County, MO



Between December 2023 and December 2024, the number of open voucher referrals vs. individuals on the prioritization list was consistently disparate, with the amount of open voucher* referrals remaining much lower than individuals on the Priority List (Boone County Coalition to End Homelessness [BCCE], n.d.).



What is an “Open Voucher?”

An **open voucher** is a housing voucher that has been issued but not yet used. This means the recipient has been approved for assistance, but they are still in the process of finding a landlord that will accept the voucher.

Conclusion

Data presented in this report highlight the ongoing challenges of homelessness in Boone County, MO. While some progress has been made in housing individuals, the demand for affordable housing has increased which puts pressure on shelter and supportive services. The local rise in homelessness reflects a broader national trend, driven by increasing housing costs and a lack of affordable options.

Trends show a rising number of individuals on the prioritization list, a continued gap between housing vouchers and those housed, and an overall increase in homelessness.

Addressing these issues requires continued collaboration, expanded housing opportunities, and a use of evidence-based solutions, such as the Housing First approach.

Moving forward, sustained funding, policy adjustments, and community engagement will be critical in reducing homelessness and improving long-term stability for affected individuals and families.



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